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# POLITICS AND THE PULPIT.

## I. THE DUTY OF FIGHTING CIVIL CORRUPTION.

BY THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM CROSWELL DOANE,  
BISHOP OF ALBANY.

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“THE duties of the clergy towards their parishioners in political matters” is a large subject to be treated briefly, all the more so because the putting of the word *duties* in the plural means that it covers more points than one.

That the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world is a statement, which contains an inherent and perpetual law of that Kingdom, and lays down, I think, a characteristic feature of the Church. Like the individual Christian, the Church is to be *in* the world but not *of* it; but *in* it as leaven, salt, light, to quicken, sweeten and brighten it; and in both instances there is a danger always of the two extremes, too entire withdrawal from, and too complete mingling with, the world. It is in the golden mean between these two that all duties lie; and the mean is not the cowardly compromise of an afterthought, but the original way, which men have left, to run to one or another extreme.

Making application of this general statement to the particular instance, I must for a moment pause to define political matters. It is a noble word degraded sadly, this word *politics*. It has in it the thought of the old pride, such as that for Jerusalem, for Rome, for Athens, even for Tarsus, which has not only adorned the great cities of the world, but has made the great citizens. It goes higher even than that, as it involves St. Augustine’s splendid plea for the Civitas Dei; and reminds us that the Church of God on earth is type and threshold of the golden-streeted city, the heavenly Jerusalem. Dragged in the mire of to-day by the selfishness of men and the unscrupulousness of parties, there is a high and holy element in political matters, about which the clergy have grave duties to discharge.

We are smarting to-day in the Capital City and in this great State, because of an utter confusion in the minds of men between questions which involve eternal principles of right, truth, morality, righteousness, manhood, citizenship, statesmanship, and the law of God ; and the passing, changing, petty, local questions and concerns about which men may honestly differ and disagree.

I believe the first duty of the clergy to their parishioners in political matters is to teach men to draw these distinctions.

There are many reasons why the Lord's Day and the Lord's House should be kept free from the heated atmosphere of political denunciations and discussions. Both the place and the day are sanctuaries, places of refuge, of refreshment, of rest from the toil and stir of platforms and parties ; and while the occasion may arise when religion should make its scourge of small cords, and utter burning words of righteous indignation against the cruelty and corruption of "wickedness in high places," there is always danger of the disastrous results that came to the Israelites who brought the Ark of God into the battlefield of the Philistines. But when political parties take up *moral* questions in *immoral* ways, it is not political preaching to denounce the immorality ; and when immoralities are threatened in political action, it is the duty of the clergy, who are the guardians of morality, to warn their people of the danger.

Let two or three instances point the argument. When it is known that moral issues are at stake in an election, I think the clergy ought to warn the people that they should secure if possible the nomination of men in their own particular party who are known to hold strong and positive convictions on the right side of those questions ; and if a party nominates unprincipled and unsafe men, the votes of honest Christian people should be withheld from them, no matter what the party demands may be. For in this way only can partisan leaders be taught to feel that they have no right to apply the modern thumb-screw of a caucus to the great issues and principles of righteousness and truth.

A very striking illustration is furnished by recent events in one of the Southern States. The Louisiana lottery question entered largely into the last elections there. It contained in it a mercenary element, namely, as to taxation ; from which the citizens of the State were largely relieved by the *blood-money* which the

treasury of that State had no scruple in receiving. Certainly no faithful teacher could fail to press home to the consciences of his people the root-evil of this accursed sin, which lies under the very strongest token of Divine displeasure since ever the soldiers mocked the misery of the Divine Saviour, by gambling under the Cross.

Nearer home, two instances have pressed in on my mind very strongly. In the Assembly of the State of New York this year two bills were introduced, dealing with matters of vital importance ; two great principles of morality and religion—the so-called Excise Law and the miscalled “ Freedom of Worship ” bill. They were both introduced and dealt with as *party* measures ; the one avowedly in the interest of the liquor dealers, whom it was supposed to restrict ; and the other plainly in the interest of the Roman Catholic effort to use the State money, for the maintenance of their religious teaching. It is nothing to the point that persistent efforts removed two or three of the grosser outrages of the bill for the promotion of intemperance, and emasculated the other bill by taking out the words which authorized the State “ to provide for ” (which certainly meant to *pay for*) certain religious services. The bills in their worst or better estate dealt with great questions of principle. They were first defeated, and then carried, in the Assembly. How ? A few politicians, desiring to secure votes for the passage of their own bills creating a water commission and changing the inspectors of a town election, bought the votes of opponents to these measures by withholding their own votes from these two bills ; and when this nefarious trade was accomplished, they turned their votes over bodily in favor of the bills which they had just before voted against ! It is not merely the imbecile inconsistency of voting two ways upon the same question within ten days ; not merely the treachery of condemning and then commending the principles which the bills involved ; but the wickedness of dealing with a question of principle and of party policy as though they were upon the same level.

Does not the duty of the clergy to their parishioners in political matters lie just here ? Because a question is made political, it does not necessarily follow that it ceases to be a question of principle ; and politics, in the modern degradation of the word—that is to say, party interests and personal advantages—must be left out when a great principle is at stake.

I think we ought to teach our people that gambling is a sin ; that intemperance must be prevented, as far as possible by law, and punished ; that the Lord's Day must be kept holy, at least by abstinence from work and the removal of the opportunities for sin ; that freedom of worship means *not* allowing the State to provide for the support of any particular religious system. I am inclined to go further even than this, since it has been demonstrated in the State of New York at any rate, that, in order to secure their own interests, liquor dealers will elect politicians who will pander to their wishes and bow to their dictation. I am inclined to think that the clergy would be wise to begin an effort *to wipe out all excise legislation from the Statute Books* ; and to keep, only in the Penal Code, enactments which would punish drunkenness and the makers of it, the violation of Sunday, and the grosser evils of the liquor trade. It pays the modern politician to keep up saloons, in order to secure the support of their frequenters, and to extort money from them for election purposes. I believe the number of saloons is due to this more than to the number of drinkers. Political saloons and saloon politics are the curse of our legislation. If it cannot be removed in any other way, let us remove liquor from politics, and politics from liquor, by ceasing to legislate on the question at all.

Deeper and farther down, because not touching questions that are merely of the day, lies the tremendous duty upon every man who is charged with the cure of souls perpetually to impress upon people,—sometimes with the voice of one who cries in the wilderness in denunciation of sin, and sometimes with the tenderer appeal that holds up the splendid standards of the Gospel and character of Christ,—the great principles of purity, righteousness, truth, manhood, and the courage of convictions, as against the cowardice of mere expediency, cost whatever the maintenance of these principles may.

WM. CROSWELL DOANE,

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## II. THE PREACHERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

BY BISHOP WILLARD F. MALLALIEU.

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IT WILL help us to a correct understanding of the duties of the clergy towards their parishioners, in political matters, if we con-

sider what is properly meant by the word politics. Certainly we do not mean the dishonest, artful schemes and tricks, the frauds that are sometimes resorted to by unprincipled men to secure honor, official position, and financial emolument, either for themselves or friends. Such conduct is everywhere and always worthy of the severest condemnation. No self-respecting and God-fearing preacher will ever have anything to do with such men and methods except to hold them up to the scorn and contempt and abhorrence of all real patriots, of all good and true men.

The proper signification of the word "politics" is expressed in the following terms: It is "the science of government, that part of ethics that has to do with the regulation and government of a nation or State, the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity; the defence of its existence and rights against foreign domination or conquest, the augmentation of its strength and resources, and the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals." Politics thus defined does not differ essentially from patriotism. It is the duty of every patriot to know the principles upon which his government is founded, to know about the laws and their administration, to care for the peace and prosperity of all the people, to antagonize every enemy and every malign influence that may arise from without or within, to protect the people in the untrammelled exercise of every proper and legitimate right, and to promote in every possible way the intelligence and morality of each individual.

It is inevitable that communities, and the nation, should be divided into parties. It will happen sometimes that such parties differ only in matters of minor importance, and the greatest object that either seeks is the control of affairs for the sake of the official honors and profit. Or it may be that parties are divided on questions that are purely and only financial, and upon which the ablest and most experienced statesmen and financiers are not agreed. Or again, it may be that parties are divided in regard to the details of administration concerning the necessity of which all are agreed. In all such cases there is no exigency which requires, or ordinarily would justify, the intervention of the clergy.

But it has often happened in the history of nations that great

moral, and social, and religious questions have confronted the people. At such critical times it is not only the privilege, but it is the imperative duty of the clergy to take a decided and active part in forming public opinion and shaping the action of the people.

Such certainly was the course pursued by the priesthood and the prophets under the Mosaic economy ; Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many others condemned or approved both laws and rulers as they antagonized, or harmonized with, the plans and purposes and laws of the Almighty. Braver men than some of these old prophets never lived. The Ahabs and Jezebels and their unholy and unpatriotic practices were fearlessly condemned. Jesus, the sublime and supreme model for all preachers, denounced in severest terms the scribes and pharisees, the rulers of his people, and held their practices up to the light of day as worthy only of the scorn of all good men. Paul and Peter and John, with multitudes of their immediate successors, followed closely the example of the Master. Huss, Savanarola, Martin Luther, and John Knox were as much political agitators and revolutionists as they were religious reformers. The sound of Luther's hammer nailing his ninety-five theses upon the heavy oak door of the old church at Wittenberg has never ceased to reverberate, and it is heard to-day wherever shackles are broken and yokes are riven, and wherever the strongholds and bastiles of tyranny and slavery are thrown down by the delivered peoples. It was heard in the clash of arms that emancipated our fathers in the War of the Revolution, and heard again in the awful thunders of that vaster conflict that brought deliverance to four millions of our outraged fellow men.

Neither of these struggles would have been entered upon had it not been for the patriotic, political action of the clergy. True, not all the clergy were agreed, for in the old times there were some who were so utterly Tory in their sentiments that all their influence was on the wrong side as regards human liberty ; and, in these recent times, there were also some who claimed to believe that the abominations and infamies of slavery were providential, and that the institution itself was divine and must continue to endure.

The preachers of New England made the Revolution possible. Away back as early as 1633 there was a Thursday lectureship

established in Boston by the Rev. John Cotton, which continued for more than two hundred years. It was especially designed for the discussion of social and political subjects by the clergy. It was for one hundred and fifty years most emphatically a nursery of liberal, progressive, revolutionary opinions and ideas. Such distinguished divines as Tucker, Parsons, Hitchcock, Langdon, Mayhew, Stillman, Cooper, Payson, Gordon, Howard and many others were developed and broadened in this school of patriotism.

A few brief extracts will show the temper and thought of these men and their relation to the vast and far-reaching political questions of the times in which they lived. In the preface to a sermon preached in Boston June 30, 1750, by J. Mayhew, occurs this passage :

“God be thanked ! one may in any part of the British dominions speak freely—if a decent regard be paid to those in authority—both of government and religion, and even give some broad hints that he is engaged on the side of liberty, the Bible, and common sense, in opposition to tyranny, priestcraft, and nonsense—without being in danger either of the Bastille or the Inquisition,—though there will always be some interested politicians, contracted bigots, and hypercritical zealots for a party, to take offence at such freedom. Their censure is praise, their praise is infamy.”

And in the same sermon :

“It is evident that the affairs of civil government may properly fall under a moral and religious consideration—at least, so far forth as it relates to the general nature and end of magistracy, and to the ground and extent of that submission which persons of a private character ought to yield to those who are vested with authority. This must be allowed by all who acknowledge the divine original of Christianity.”

The same bold speaker added in a note to the sermon :

“No civil rulers are to be obeyed when they enjoin things that are inconsistent with the commands of God. No government is to be submitted to at the expense of that which is the sole end of all government, the common good and safety of society. The only reason of the institution of civil government, and the only rational ground of submission to it, is the common safety and utility. If, therefore, in any case, the common safety and utility would not be promoted by submission to government, but the contrary, there is no ground or motion for obedience and submission, but for the contrary.”

In an election sermon preached by Samuel Cooke, May 30, 1770, are these utterances :

“I trust on this occasion I may, without offence, plead the cause of our African slaves, and humbly propose the pursuit of some effectual measures at least to prevent the further importation of them. Difficulties insuperable, I apprehend, prevent an adequate remedy for what is past. Let the



time past more than suffice wherein we, the patrons of liberty, have dishonored the Christian name, and degraded human nature nearly to a level with the beasts that perish. Ethiopia has long stretched out her hands to us. Let not sordid gain, acquired by the merchandise of slaves and the souls of men, harden our hearts against her piteous moans. When God ariseth and when he visiteth what shall we answer? May it be the glory of this province, of this respectable General Assembly, and, we could wish, of this session, to lead in the cause of the oppressed. This will avert the impending vengeance of Heaven, procure you the blessing of multitudes of your fellow men ready to perish, be highly approved of our common Father, who is no respecter of persons, and, we trust, an example which would excite the highest attention of our sister colonies."

Samuel Langdon, President of Harvard College, spoke thus in an election sermon, May 31, 1775 :

"If the great servants of the public forget their duty, betray their trust, and sell their country, or make war against the most valuable rights and privileges of the people, reason and justice require that they should be discarded, and others appointed in their room, without any regard to formal resignations of their forfeited powers."

On May 29, 1776, Samuel West delivered an election sermon, in which these opinions are given :

"The authority of a tyrant is of itself null and void. No body of men can justly and lawfully authorize any person to tyrannize over and enslave his fellow creatures, or do anything contrary to equity and goodness. As magistrates have no authority but what they derive from the people, whenever they act contrary to the public good, and pursue measures destructive of the peace and safety of the community, they forfeit their right to govern the people."

The preacher, if he be worthy of his profession, is called of God to the performance of the most solemn and important duties. The pulpit is the coign of vantage. All that the tribune is to the statesman, the platform to the lecturer, the chair to the professor, the pulpit is, and even more, to the preacher. The preacher is so identified with the pulpit that it is easy to so personify the pulpit that when we come to speak of politics and the pulpit we mean politics and the preacher. The preacher is always a man before he enters upon the discharge of the functions of his high and holy office. No inherent right of manhood is necessarily given up by the preacher. This is equally true of his citizenship. The preacher would be derelict to the plainest requirements of duty should he refuse to share the obligations and privileges which rest upon all his fellow citizens. There may be

exemption for some few of the minor responsibilities, but the essential ones are never really laid aside, much less ignored.

There are four principal requisites which especially go to make up a genuine preacher. First of all he must be a teacher of the people; and this involves the idea that he shall have a well-trained mind, that he shall be scholarly in his tastes and habits, and that he shall have abundant stores of knowledge. He must know men and things. He must be familiar with the past, alive to all present interests, and thoughtful concerning the future. Nothing that really affects the material, intellectual, or spiritual welfare of man must be outside of his range of thought and intelligent and comprehensive study. This will certainly bring him into intimate contact with living men, and will involve him in the affairs that interest his fellow men—and so connect politics and the pulpit.

The preacher must also be an example to all who come within the range of his influence. He is taken as an example whether he will or not. His example will be either harmful or helpful, as the case may be. His example is not limited by his public devotions and pulpit ministrations, nor by the tone of his voice, the expression of his countenance, or the style of his dress. His example has to do with private and public goodness. What is right and proper for the most blameless man to do in private and in public should be the standard of conduct on the part of the preacher. This principle will apply to his personal conduct everywhere; he must be a gentleman without fear and without reproach, sensitive and sensible to the last degree where honor and integrity are involved. If he is to be an example in all things, he will of necessity find himself within the realm of politics, and here he must illustrate the highest type of patriotism, loyalty and righteousness.

Again, the preacher must be a leader, for if he fails in this respect the world has but very little use for him. His superior opportunities for the best culture place upon him the duty of leadership. If he has not the wisdom, nor the courage, nor the high spirit of consecration necessary for this, he will receive but very slight honor either from God or man. And this means much more than leadership in things that are purely intellectual or spiritual. It means that the preacher should have clear, definite, well-considered opinions on all matters that concern the safety,

welfare, and progress of the people. Nor will it be enough that he has these opinions and keeps them to himself. He must declare himself; his voice must ring out in defiance of a vicious public opinion; he must set forth and reiterate his convictions without fear or favor. The great lack of humanity in all the past, and even now, is in the right kind of leaders. When all others fail, it should be known that the preacher walks in the way of righteousness, and that it will be safe to follow where he leads.

Furthermore, the preacher should be a reformer. There has been no time of which we have any record on the pages of history where there have not been abuses. In every age there have been wrongs inflicted upon the weak by the hand of power. In every age there have been, and, even now, there are in every land, the down-trodden and the oppressed, the helpless victims of injustice. There is as yet no land where the pure and holy principles of the Gospel of the Son of God thoroughly prevail, where they perfectly permeate and leaven the masses so that all are secure in the possession and enjoyment of all their rights. The preacher, if he is true to his Master, will take his place among those who toil most earnestly and persistently for the amelioration of the condition of all who suffer from whatever cause. No preacher has any right to be a fanatic, or a visionary, or an impracticable. The foolishness of many so-called reformers consists in frantic and futile attempts to accomplish the impossible. The right way is to give careful thought to the evils that afflict society, then find out the remedy, then do the next thing, and the next thing, and the next thing, howsoever small it may be, until the remedy is applied and the evil removed. The text book of the preacher is the Bible. Every genuine reform that has ever blessed humanity has its germinal principle in the Bible. The Book of God, the Book of Humanity, the Bible, is full of reformatations and revolutions, and every one of them if wisely inaugurated and prosecuted must be a source of blessing to the human race. If the preacher knows the Bible, if he follows its teachings, he will be a reformer, and constantly will he be found in the work of uplifting the weak, while at the same time he smites with all the power God has given him every outrage and every villany. He will follow the example of Jesus and Paul, the two greatest reformers the world has ever known, and fearlessly stand for truth and jus-

tice, no matter what the consequences may be to himself. The world needs

“Preachers like Woolman,  
Or like those who bore  
The faith of Wesley  
To this western shore,  
And deemed no convert genuine till he broke  
Alike his servant's and the devil's yoke.”

In these times in which we live there is as much need that preachers should be teachers, examples, leaders and reformers, as at any time in the history of Christianity or of the world. There are a thousand questions in which they need not especially concern themselves, and about which they need not discourse. But there are others which affect the intellectual and moral development of the people, and others still which are related in morals to the perpetuity of our free institutions, and others which are vital to the religious liberties and rights of the nation. The questions in either case need not be specified in detail; every intelligent person can enumerate and classify them. Concerning the first it is not expected that the clergy will undertake to instruct or control the people who may attend upon their ministrations. In regard to the second, every sensible, loyal, progressive American citizen holds firmly to the opinion that each preacher should wisely and at proper times discuss these all-important matters, and in the light of God's Word set forth the claims of duty, and by the highest moral persuasions incite and inspire all to its faithful performance. Any preacher who neglects so to do fails to answer the reasonable expectations of the people. He may not excuse himself with the vain plea that his congregation is made up of different parties, nor the still more worthless plea that he must not mix religion and politics. If he really loves God, if he loves his country, if he loves humanity, he must consider and discuss the great underlying principles that are essential to the continuance of good government and to the peace and prosperity of the country. He must condemn all moral and political wrongs, no matter how venerable, or respectable, or powerful, utterly regardless of what party may be responsible for their existence or continuance. He must voice the cry of the outraged and down-trodden of this and every other land. He must be the great-hearted champion of all the friendless and helpless.

He must strike down with the whole strength of his indignant manhood any giant evil that dares to threaten the high, and holy, and chivalrous hopes of all good people in behalf of pure homes and heaven-exalted native land.

Such political preachers will always be in demand, and will challenge the love and the confidence of the best, and bravest, and of all true patriots. Politics and religion, when both are what they should be, will blend harmoniously, and together bless and uplift the people, and at the same time render strong and permanent all that is most excellent in our social life and civil institutions.

WILLARD F. MALLALIEU.